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THE THREE HOUSES.

In a certain street of a certain town well known to me there are three houses standing together, and forming a remarkable exception from the general fate of the houses of that street, which has been—to yield one after another to the advancing genius of Commerce. Most have broken out into shops; some have put large brass-plates on their doors, and declared themselves millinery establishments—further insinuations of the fact being made by the faint shade of a lady's dress seen within the *quondam* dining-room window. A few have projected, at nooks of doors and windows, modest little boards, announcing 'FURNISHED APARTMENTS.' The three exceptional houses stand out in hardened old-fashioned gentility, as private dwellings. They have not even brass-plates for the names of the owners or occupants. These must, of course, be inferred as people superior not merely to trade, but to the professions. I suspect them to be a trio of dowagers and well-endowed maiden ladies.

No matter what the occupants are. The houses speak for themselves. Inveterate conservatives they are, despising all innovatory ideas, ignoring progress, and scorning the bribes of upstart wealth. One can read the whole sentiment of the situation in their fronts. That one on the left extreme has evidently an uneasy feeling about the chemist's shop next door: you trace it in that drawn-down window-blind, last of the row in the drawing-room, and in the fact of the cockatoo's cage being always seen at the window furthest away. A dainty lady of fashion drawing up her skirts from the brushing contact of some common mortal on the *pavé*, is but a type of this genteel mansion shrinking away from that commercial neighbour—once an equal and a friend; but now so no longer. The right-hand house is similarly beset by a bell-hanger. And this was even a more cruel case, for the edifice, now so degraded, was formerly the residence of a nobleman, who lent an aroma of dignity to the whole row. What must have been the feelings of our right-hand house when his lordship departed and a bell-hanger took his place! It would seem to it as if creation must henceforth have but half its brightness. I have a notion that the house has ever since had a shut-up, misanthropical look, as if it no longer viewed things pleasantly. With the centre house, matters of course are not quite so bad. It has still a genteel friend on either hand to stand between it and the immediate contact of the vulgar. It must feel, however, how near the case of each neighbour is to its own, for 'Paries cum proximis' certainly applies here fully as much as in cases of conflagration. I have no doubt it

joins heartily in the general feeling arising from the common circumstances. Sworn brothers, indeed, they all are in affliction, intensely sympathetic, intimate as conspirators, determined from ground to garret, back and front, to resist the encroaching tide of degradation. If there be any difference in the central house, it will be, I venture to say, less in the way of a happy consciousness of better protection from the common evil, than in a fear of the constancy of its either-hand neighbours. Vexed as these already are by juxtaposition of trade, they have obviously less interest in withstanding it. They may lose heart and give way—and what then? Then will the central house be the sole representative of fashion in the district; and how long can it expect so to continue? These, however, are painful considerations which it must desire to stifle, whether from regard to its own comfort or a feeling of honour towards its associates. Undoubtedly the prominent acknowledged feeling of the trio is a united vigorous resolution for common resistance to a common evil.

I speak of the active daylight feelings of the three houses. While the bustle of business is going on in the street, and the chemist's and bell-hanger's have their windows all awake, and a throng of customers coming about their doors, then do the patrician trio thrill with disgust at the vicinage, and pledge themselves to stand by each other in eternal recalcitration of commerce. But of course they have their cooler and more meditative moments, when, the shops being shut, and customers gone home, they have time, calmness, and leisure to reflect on what the end is to be. The gayest have their dull moments. The proudest experience synopses of self-assertion. The poet tells us, that 'the paths of glory lead but to the grave.' So the houses now and then confess to themselves that resistance to trade is finite, and that, in the fulness of time, the fate of all other houses of gentility will be theirs—they must become shops. Those neat rooms where aristocratic spinsterhood now dwells in cleanly state, surrounded with portraits of historical ancestors, and receiving visits of only the best company, must by and by be stuffed—O horrid word!—with goods. That door, where powdered John receives superb lady-visitors sweeping in from their carriages, will in time welcome every one having money wherewith to buy. To what base uses may we return—houses as well as their inhabitants! One might have a new *Death and the Lady* for a house, telling it that, however rejoicing now in its handsome proportions and furnishings, glowing in all the pride of life, to this complexion it must come at last. Or, as we would address the generous and beautiful racer: Lovely art thou now in thy fleetness and ardour; but

the sand-cart is thy ultimate destiny! so might we apostrophise the aristocratic town-mansion: Handsome now—dignified—conversant only with gay and noble things—but in time to go down to drudgery, as others have done!

Only a little further west is a quarter of the town comparatively new, and where as yet Trade has not set even its snout. Octagons, ovals, and streets of stately houses are there, nearly all occupied by persons of fashion. An elegant, flourishing society of mansions it is, with, at the utmost, an insinuation of LODGINGS at two or three corner buildings—just as the greatest families are scarcely ever without a poor relation or so, as if to remind them that there is such a thing as necessity in this world. The idea of one of these houses condescending to any such useful purpose as that of—a Shop, seems as if it never could occur. Surely were any one so mean-spirited as to think of such a thing, the very stones of the rest would rush in indignation upon it, and batter the base thought into annihilation. And yet — O my dear friends, be not too uplifted with your fine architecture, your exclusive privileges, your present grand tenants, your luxurious internal furnishings, which make life so rackingly smooth, your handsome carriages ever rolling about, your army of velveted lackeys. For verily, as all these things have come to an end with places further east, so will they come to an end with you. Behold there the case of the Genteel Trio, once forming a part of a great district, all of which was as unexceptionably aristocratic as yours now is. As little as yourselves now do, did they dream of the fate to which they are drawing nigh. Yet you see the surge of the Useful is rising and beating around them. Short while can they be expected to bank out the tide. Read your prospective history in theirs, and be humble.

PUPPETS—RELIGIOUS AND ARISTOCRATIC.

In a former article, we traced the wonderful unity and consistency of human nature in connection with the history of Harlequin. Descending in the scale of dramatic performances, we come to a species of entertainment which has proved as attractive to men in all ages, in all climes, and in all stages of development, as have the drolleries of Harlequin, and for the fascination exercised by which we are at a greater loss to account; for we are not aware that phrenologists have as yet traced the love of puppets to any especial bump on the human cranium. One bold man, indeed, who has written on the subject, maintains that puppets owe their origin to the precocious instincts of maternity in the first little girl, whose doll was the original and type of all succeeding puppets. For want of a better theory, we would fain adopt this, which, by making puppets come into existence with the second generation of the human family, at once accounts for the presence of these mimic actors, not only among the ancient nations of Europe, but likewise among the Hindoos, Javanese, Siamese, Chinese, Tatars, Turks, Persians, and ancient Egyptians, and allows us to attribute to a degree of childishness, never as yet outgrown by individual or by race, the great attraction exercised by them over the adults as well as the children of these various ages, climes, and nations. But we stand corrected by another writer, who denies the accuracy of the proposition that the child's doll is the original and type of the puppet. A rag-doll, says this authority, represents a simple idea only—the idea of the human configuration: it is flexible, but not mobile. The idea represented by a puppet is complex; it is the idea of motion added to that of form. The doll, according to his apprehension, is not the first, nor even the simplest product of the plastic instinct. The stick on which the brother of the little girl takes a ride is a more direct and a more rudimentary expression of this instinct.

Our readers will see what depths we might get into were we to attempt to fathom the mysteries of the origin of the theatrical microcosm we call a puppet-show; and we trust, therefore, that we shall be excused if, overleaping this difficult point, as also the connection of puppets with the mythic rites and popular amusements of Asiatic nations, we pass on to some consideration of their progressive development in Europe. It is a curious fact that the history of this development exhibits precisely the same phases as the history of the regular drama—puppet-shows having, like this, passed through a hieratic and aristocratic phase before attaining their broadly popular character; and it is more remarkable still, that the cycle completed among the classic nations of antiquity, recommenced in Christian Europe. Egypt, Greece, Etruria, and Latium, all had at one time their puppet-idols, obeying the directing hand of the priests, and filling the people with wondering awe. Gradually, however, puppets disappeared from the temples, and became instruments of amusement to the rich, in whose convivial meetings it seems to have been usual to introduce them towards the end of the repast; and the humble pleasure-seekers, mentioned in a recent number of this Journal, who pay their 2d. or 4d. to obtain a sight of Cardoni's Fantoccini, may lift their heads high in defiance of those who would scoff at them for deriving amusement from such childish exhibitions, when we tell them that the choicest spirits of the foremost nations of antiquity, even such men as Socrates and his disciples, did not disdain to be present at puppet-shows. It must be confessed, however, that on these, as on similar occasions in more modern times, the puppets were not limited to dumb show, but had an interpreter of their action behind the scene, like our friend Punch in the present day, and were made the expositors of more poignant satire and more ribald wit than would probably have been tolerated if ostensibly spoken by living actors.

Among the Romans as well as the Greeks, the aristocratic phase of puppet-shows soon merged in the popular; and such became eventually the passion of the Greek people, more especially, for this pastime, that not only were there separate theatres in Athens for this kind of representation, but the wooden actors were even tolerated on the stage on which the master-works of the Greek tragedians were performed—a desecration sufficient to make the hairs stand on end on the head of a modern worshipper of classic literature, but which does not, after all, seem to us so very extraordinary, when we consider that the actors of Euripides, Æschylus, and Sophocles were themselves only half flesh and blood. Their exaggerated masks, with features large enough to be discerned by the spectator in the most distant part of the vast theatre, the buskins which lent them additional height, and the false arms and hands which brought these limbs into proportion with the head and legs, were all of wood; and it was, moreover, usual in Greece, in times of disastrous wars, when public and private finances were low, and actors were at a premium, to introduce wooden figures among the choristers to fill up the required number at a cheap rate. The difference was thus only between half and whole; and the superiority, in point of ease and grace in movement, must certainly have been on the side of the puppets, the construction of which, according to no less authorities than Aristoteles, Apuleius, and Galen, had attained a degree of perfection hardly equalled even in our own days of extraordinary mechanical skill.

Christianity found puppets in their third or popular phase, established throughout the length and breadth of the eastern and western empires; and as the Christian fathers, while launching well-deserved anathemas against the immoral and cruel theatrical representations of the times, speak in much more lenient terms of these mimic actors, there is reason

to suppose that the latter had not so completely discarded all sense of decency as their living compeers. However this may have been, the church seems to have taken a hint from their popularity, and the temples of Christendom soon vied with each other in scenic representations, by means of puppets, of the leading events in sacred history, and of the legends of saints and martyrs. In the eleventh century, already the mechanism of these puppets seems, in some instances, to have been so perfect and so astounding in its effects, as to have gained for its inventors the unenviable reputation of necromancers, and brought the art into disrepute among many prelates, who regarded this seeming resurrection of saints and martyrs as sacrilegious. In spite of their denunciations, however, and even in spite of the distinct commands of synods and councils, these ecclesiastical exhibitions continued to prevail in all Catholic countries to a very late period.

At Dieppe, a festival in honour of the Virgin, called the *autouries d'Août*, was celebrated up to the middle of the seventeenth century, with a scenic pomp and splendour that attained for them a world-wide reputation, and drew thousands of visitors to the town. A sloping stage was raised in the choir of the church of St James, on the summit of which, immediately below the vaulted roof of the church, which was studded with stars on an azure ground, appeared the Eternal Father, seated on a cloud, and surrounded by a host of angels, hovering on outspread wings, and moving to and fro, as if in execution of His orders. Some of these angels performed the feat of lighting the tapers in the church, while others alternately raised and withdrew from their mouths wind instruments, from which they were supposed to draw the sounds which, in reality, proceeded from the organ. At the lower extremity of the stage, a figure of the Virgin reclined upon a couch. At the commencement of the mass, two angels descended, lifted her in their arms, and slowly reascended with her towards the Father, in whose arms she was not deposited until the moment for the adoration arrived, though during the ascension she repeatedly stretched forth her hands, as if impatient to be in heaven.

In Belgium, even in the beginning of the eighteenth century, scenes in purgatory were represented in the churches in all the chief cities, after the following fashion. A clever distribution of light and colour gave to the enclosed stage the appearance of a fiery furnace. In the midst of the flames, a number of human figures, with fettered limbs, were seen making fearful grimaces, writhing as if in torture, and seemingly uttering loud cries. After a time an angel descended with a huge rosary in his hand, on which the tortured souls precipitated themselves with frantic gestures, scaling the beads like the steps of a ladder. When they had attained the summit, their chains fell off. The Virgin Mary, attended by St Dominic, next made her appearance, and taking the redeemed sinners by the hand, presented them to the Saviour, who assigned to each his place in heaven.

In Poland, the spectacle of the *Scapka*, or stable, was the favourite Christmas-piece, and was continued far into the eighteenth century. The puppets, here called *lalki*, first enacted the scene of the Nativity, and the adoration of the magi and the shepherds. Then followed the massacre of the innocents, in which a son of Herod was murdered by mistake. The wicked king, driven to despair, calls upon death, who arrives in the form of a skeleton with a scythe, and mows off his head. Next uprises the devil, with fiery-red tongue, pointed ears and long tail, who picks up the royal body with a pitchfork, and carries it off. In the Greek Church, similar representations by means of puppets were usual. At Moscow and Novgorod, the mystery of the three young men in the fiery furnace was performed every year in the churches on the

Sunday before Christmas; everywhere the plastic puppets adapting themselves to the genius of the people.

A ruder form of hieratic puppets were the terrific monsters which were paraded through the various cities of Christendom in Rogation-week, or Corpus Christi day, or on the anniversaries of certain patrons of the several towns, either valiant knights or pious prelates, who had attained the honour of canonisation for having rescued the country from some devastating beast, or the population from more fearful idolatry. Among these, the hydra of the abbey of Fleury in France—which, when it opened its terrific jaws, displayed a blazing furnace—held a conspicuous place, as also the great dragon of Paris, slain by St Marcel, and which in Rogation-week was promenaded round the square in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame, to the great delight and terror of the children and adults of the old *ciité*, who flung into its gaping maw fruits, cakes, and money.

But it was not only dragons and other animal-like creations of the imagination that figured in these processions—giant Goliaths and St Christophers, our own familiar Gog and Magog, and other like personages, also played a part therein; and had we not already committed ourselves to another classification of our subject, we would be tempted to call this the heroic phase of puppets, as they so frequently appear in gigantic and awe-inspiring forms. Female figures seem to have been of rare occurrence in these processions, yet there is one curious instance on record in which such alone figured. It had been usual in Venice since the tenth century to celebrate annually what was termed the festival of the Marys, in commemoration of the rescue of twelve betrothed maidens of the city from pirates. Twelve maidens, called the twelve Marys, selected by the *seignoria*, and whose marriage-portions were defrayed by the public treasury, were promenaded in procession through the streets, under circumstances of great pomp and splendour. However, the expenses connected with the custom, and the intrigues caused by the election of the young girls, led in the course of time to a reduction of the number, and ultimately to the substitution for them of wooden puppets. But though Goliaths and St Christophers might be tolerated in wood, the people of Venice would have no wooden Marys; and in 1849 the exasperation of the populace against the poor puppets shewed itself in such acts of violence, that once more the Marys had to be rescued from the hands of ruffians. To this day, the denomination *Maria di legno* is applied in Venice to women deficient in the usual graces of their sex.

England also bore her share in these religious puppet-shows. An image of the crucified Saviour in the abbey of Boxley in Kent, of which not only the head, but even the eyes and mouth, could move, enjoyed great celebrity; and up to the period of Henry VIII's breach with the pope, the Catholic clergy throughout Great Britain celebrated the festivals of Christmas, Easter, and the Ascension 'in manner of a show and interlude,' as Lambard, the historian of Kent, expresses it, and by means of certain small 'puppettes.' The same historian mentions having been present in St Paul's Cathedral on Whitunday 1520, when he saw the descent of the Holy Ghost represented by means of a white pigeon, which was let down from an opening in the vaulted dome; and he likewise alludes to the scene of the resurrection as represented in the parish church of Witney, in Oxfordshire—all the actors in the sacred drama being represented by puppets moved by springs.

The Reformation, of course, put an end to dramatic representations in the churches in all the countries where it was established, and even exercised considerable influence as regards this point in the countries

that remained in the old faith, for there had always been a party within the church strongly opposed to them. In Protestant Germany, Holland, and Great Britain, the religious puppets shared the fate of all other sacred images; and only a few now remain in museums to tell what were the means by which the devotional feelings of simpler ages might be roused. The importance attached to the crucifix of Boxley Abbey was evinced by the solemnity with which it was consigned to destruction. On Sunday, 24th of February 1538, its mysteries were explained to the people by the bishop of Rochester, after which it was taken to Paul's Cross, and there broken to pieces. But though expelled from the churches, religious puppet-shows nevertheless continued to be performed for the edification of the people as before, and remained great favourites. But even where these latter were most in force, and even after the development of regular dramatic performances, and the establishment of regular theatres, the lives of the saints and martyrs, the most touching histories of the Old Testament, and, above all, the two greatest events of the New, continued to form the repertory of puppet-shows; and even in the present day the mysteries of the Nativity and of the Passion are performed by puppets in all the provinces of France, as well as in Italy, Spain, Poland, and parts of Germany. In England, the peculiar circumstances of the country brought the hieratic phase of puppet-shows to a much more speedy conclusion; and at present, such spectacles as we have described would probably be looked upon as little less than blasphemous and sacrilegious.

The aristocratic phase of modern puppet-history may be said to have commenced when the famous Italian mathematician Giovanni Torriani constructed puppets for the amusement of Charles V. in his retirement at St Just, with such wonderful perfection that they excited the superstitious fears of the superior of the convent. But Charles V. is not the only royal personage that has amused himself with these ingenious playthings. The registers of the royal treasury of France shew that, in 1669, a certain Jean Brioché, who, from the commencement of the reign of Louis XIV., had enjoyed great celebrity in the double character of tooth-extractor and puppet-showman, was invited to St Germain-en-Laye, the residence of the young dauphin, and kept there during three months for the amusement of the children of France, at a cost of 1365 livres; and another entry in the same book informs us that Brioché had been preceded by another puppet-showman, by name François Dartelin, who had stayed at St Germain from the 17th of July of the same year till the end of August, and who received twenty livres a day during part of the time, and fifteen livres a day during the other part—facts which prove a strongly developed taste for this kind of amusement in the young prince, then only nine years of age. Indeed, there seems to have been a perfect rage for puppets among the high society of France during the latter part of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries; and so much was this taste considered a matter of distinction, that Mademoiselle Pelicier, a celebrated actress in Paris during the latter period, who gave a pension to a puppet-man to exhibit before her twice a day, was taunted by her comrades with giving herself the airs of a duchess. In 1705, a puppet-show was exhibited before the Duke di Bourgoigne in the Hôtel de Trèmes; and at that same period similar representations formed one of the chief attractions of the far-famed *divertissements* of Sceaux, where the Duchesse du Maine kept her court, and where they must have remained very long in favour; for in 1746, the Comte d'Eu, grand-master of the artillery, gave a puppet representation there, at which Voltaire was present. When the prince had concluded his exhibition, Voltaire, in his turn, took the direction of the

marionettes, and in the name of Polichinello—who, being the wit among puppets, we need hardly say was a great favourite in France—improvised some very graceful and complimentary verses to the comte. This was not, however, Voltaire's first introduction to this popular and aristocratic amusement, for during a previous visit to Madame du Châtelet at the Château de Cirey, and at the very time when the lady was engaged in writing commentaries on Leibnitz, and the poet was putting the last touches to his tragedy of *Merope*, the serious Madame du Châtelet, anxious about her guest's health, and in order to prevent him from devoting himself too closely to study, had recourse to our wooden heroes to wile him from his books.

In Germany, the same taste for puppet-shows prevailed in high society during the eighteenth century. Everybody knows the love of Goethe for these mimic actors, and that in his youth he wrote a play for them which was afterwards performed before the court of Weimar. But it is not so well known that Haydn wrote fine operettas for the puppet-theatre kept by Prince Nicholas Joseph Esterhazy, at his castle of Eisenstadt in Hungary. In this staid and sober nineteenth century, puppets are never, we believe, admitted into private houses on this side the Alps except to amuse children; but in Italy, where the love of puppets has always been greater than in any other country, it is not unusual for amateurs of the higher classes to amuse themselves at their own houses with these mimic actors, that are often allowed to give utterance to political opinions and feelings which dwell in living hearts, but which living lips venture not to utter except through the medium of Polichinello and his mates.

We have reached the limits of our space, and have not yet touched upon the third or popular phase of puppets. But the subject is too interesting to be despatched in a few words, and we must therefore reserve it for some future occasion.

THE BOTTLE-IMP.

FROM THE GERMAN.

WHILE Venice was yet in her palmy days of commerce, there came thither a young German merchant named Richard, a bold and joyous fellow. There was much disquiet in Germany at that time, owing to the Thirty Years' War; for which reason the young merchant was especially glad that his business called him to stay some time in Venice, where people were not so warlike, and where, as he heard, he should find rich wines, the best and most delicious fruits, to say nothing of many most beautiful women, of whom he was a decided amateur.

Accordingly, he soon began to lead a very gay life, and was introduced into all sorts of society. Many a day passed in revelry and riot, where all faces were wild and joyous, one only excepted—that of a Spanish captain—who although he attended at all the pranks of the wild crew with whom Richard had associated himself, never exchanged a word with his companions, and constantly wore an expression of strong disquiet on his dark features. The rest willingly suffered his presence, because he was a man of good means and station, who made no scruple on several occasions of paying for the whole party.

But in spite of his gaiety, money began erelong to fail poor Richard; and he sorrowfully found that a life so extravagantly delightful must soon come to an end for him. The others observed his melancholy and its cause, and had their jest at the well-fleeced handgogling wretch who could not refrain, so long as a

shekel remained in his purse, from sucking the poisoned sweets.

One evening the Spaniard drew him aside, and with unusual friendliness took him to an unfrequented part of the city. The young man was at first alarmed by this proceeding. But he thought, 'The fellow knows that there is not much to be got from me; and as for my skin, if he covets that, he must first adventure his own, which, doubtless, he thinks rather too high a stake.'

But the Spanish captain, seating himself on the wall of an old ruined building, made the young merchant sit by him, and began as follows: 'It appears to me, my young friend, as if you were wanting in that faculty which has become to me a burden past bearing; that is, the power of procuring at any hour the amount of money you require, and so being able to go on at your pleasure. This, and many other important gifts, I will hand over to you for a reasonable sum.'

'But what can you want with money, when you wish to get rid of the power of procuring it?' asked Richard.

'Why, the circumstances are these: I don't know whether you are acquainted with certain little creatures called bottle-imps. They are little black fiends, shut up in glasses. Whoever possesses such a one may obtain from him whatever pleasures in life he desires, but especially unlimited gold. On the other hand, this accommodating friend requires the soul of his possessor, provided the owner dies without having delivered over his imp into other hands. But this can be done only by sale; and, moreover, he must receive for it a less sum than he paid. Mine cost me ten ducats; if you will give me nine for it, 'tis yours.'

While Richard thought over this, the Spaniard continued: 'I could, of course, cheat anybody into purchasing it like any other bottle and toy, just as it was put into my own hands by a tradesman without a conscience. But I should fear to burden my conscience still more by so doing, and I therefore put the offer fairly and frankly before you. You are yet young and full of life, and will have many an opportunity of getting rid of the thing when you are tired of it.'

'Good sir,' said Richard, 'do not think me uncivil; but I must own I have been a little cheated already in this town of Venice, and even my nine ducats might be of value to one who spends as I have seen you do.'

'Excuse me for not striking you dead,' said the Spaniard haughtily. 'It is because I hope you will still rid me of my bottle-imp, and also because I am not minded to do penance, which would thereby be much increased in length and severity.'

'Would you let me make a few trials of the thing first?' prudently asked young Richard.

'To what purpose?' replied the Spaniard. 'It stays with no one, helps no one but him who has fairly purchased it.'

The youth grew anxious: it was uncomfortable sitting there together at night in that lonely place, in spite of the captain's declared pacific intentions; and then there hovered before his fancy all the delights which the bottle-imp would procure him. He therefore determined to risk the half of his remaining cash on it, only trying first whether he could beat down something of the price.

'Fool!' laughed the captain—'it was for your good I asked the highest price, and for the good of those who buy it after you, that some one may not too soon get it for the lowest possible sum, and so go irrecoverably to a place it would be unpollite to mention.'

'O never mind,' said Richard good-humouredly; 'I shan't be in a hurry to sell the wonderful thing again. If I could have it for five ducats'—

'Oh, as you please,' said the Spaniard.

Then, in return for the money, he handed to the young man a thin glass bottle, wherein by the starlight Richard saw something black dancing strangely up and down. As a trial, he immediately wished to have in his right hand double the sum he had just paid, and instantly felt ten ducats there. Then both went back to the inn with new and cheerful faces; the Spaniard soon took leave, without staying for the gorgeous banquet which Richard immediately ordered, paying down to his distrustful host the price beforehand, while the bottle-imp kept filling his pockets with the desired ducats.

Whoever would themselves like to possess such an imp, can best fancy what sort of life our young friend led from this day. He bought a castle and two villas, and surrounded himself with every kind of splendour and luxury. He spent some time in revelry at one of his country-seats, with a crowd of idle and dissipated young persons of rank, amongst whom was a gay and distinguished beauty of the place called Lucretia. One day he was sitting with her in the garden, on the brink of a swift deep streamlet, laughing and jesting, till at last Lucretia espied the bottle which Richard wore in his breast, by a gold chain. Before he could hinder her, she had pulled away the chain, and playfully held the phial up against the light. At first she laughed at the strange capers of the little black creature within, then crying suddenly in affright: 'Ugh, it's a toad!' flung chain, phial, and imp into the stream, which swept all out of sight.

The poor young man strove to hide his concern, lest Lucretia should question him further, and have him taken up for sorcery. But as soon as he could get away from her, he retired to think what was to be done. He had yet his castle, his villas, and a heap of ducats in his pocket. He then felt for his money, and, to his glad surprise, found the phial and the imp in his hand. 'Lo!' he cried exulting, 'I possess a treasure of which no earthly power can rob me; and he would have kissed the phial, only the little black thing making antics within appeared to him a little too frightful.

His wildness and extravagance now increased tenfold; he left not a wish ungratified, and was wont to laugh at the Spanish captain for having given up such a treasure, and, as he had been told, retired into a cloister. But all pleasures came to an end; and so Richard found, when in the midst of his riotous career he fell dangerously ill. He received no help from his bottle-imp, on whom he called for aid ten times over in the course of the first day: but instead of comfort, he had a dream, in which the bottle-fiend appeared to be dancing merrily among the rest of the bottles, knocking and emassing them, and screaming forth songs of triumph at the near end of his servitude.

Ah, how long seemed to the sick man the rest of that night! He dared not close his eyes; yet, while open, the imp was constantly before them. He rang for his servants, but they slept sound; so he was obliged to lie all alone in his anguish, resolving that, if God would let him live to the morning, at all events to get rid of the bottle-imp.

When morning came, he determined to secure first what property he could; and in addition to the castle, villas, and all kinds of costly furniture, he collected a great heap of ducats, and placed them under his pillow. Then, somewhat calmed, he considered how to get rid of the imp; and an opportunity presented itself. The doctor, who came that day to see him, was very fond of all kinds of strange animals, which he kept in spirits; and he shewed him the creature as one of these, knowing the doctor to be too pious a man to accept it in its own character. The creature had become very lively, and played such antics in the phial, that the good man, wishing further to examine

it, proposed to buy it of him. To satisfy his conscience in some degree, Richard asked as much as he could—four ducats, two dollars, and twenty pence. But the doctor would give only four ducats, and said he must consider even of that for a few days. Then in his terror the poor fellow offered the bargain for three; and receiving the money, he at once gave it to his servant to be spent on the poor.

Meanwhile, his illness became more violent than ever. He lay in a constant delirious fever; and though by degrees he came to himself again, his complete recovery was delayed by trouble of mind about his ducats; for as soon as he became sensible, he searched for them under his pillow, and found them gone. He got up, and began to consider how to turn his property into gold. But lo! there came people with quittances signed by himself for money paid as the price of all his possessions; for in the days of his folly, in order to win Lucretia's favourable ear to his addresses, he had given her blank forms to fill up as she liked. Thus he must now prepare to go forth almost a beggar.

The doctor now came to him with a very grave face.

'Well, sir doctor,' cried he, in a burst of ill-humour, 'if, after the fashion of your tribe, you come with a long bill, give me some poison into the bargain, for I have not a penny to buy a loaf with.'

'Not so,' said the physician gravely. 'I give you the price of my whole attendance free; but here is a very rare medicine which I have put in that cupboard, which you will find needful for the restoration of your health, and for which you shall pay me two ducats. Will you?'

'With all my heart!' cried the young merchant joyfully; and having paid the sum to the doctor, the latter at once left the apartment. When Richard put his hand into the cupboard, he felt the fatal bottle between his fingers, wrapped in a scrap of paper, on which was written—

Thy body I desired to cure,
Thou my soul's ruin to insure;
But yet my wisdom, higher far,
Contrived thy evil scheme to mar.
The stratagem thy praise demands:
Thus I play back into thy hands
Thy bottle-imp, and with the elf,
Give the rogue rope to hang himself!

A terror seized poor Richard at the thought that he had now rebought the bottle-imp, and at a very small price. Still, there was satisfaction mingled with the feeling; for as he was determined soon again to be rid of the thing, he felt no scruple in resolving, by its means, to revenge himself on the cruel Lucretia. First he filled his pockets with ducats, whose weight almost pulled him down to the ground, and deposited the whole sum with the nearest lawyer, receiving a legal acknowledgment, only keeping back a certain number of pieces of gold, with which he hastened to Lucretia's house. Here he made the bottle-imp perform all kinds of jugglers' tricks, and convinced her that it was the very thing she had thrown into the stream. She instantly wished to possess such a plaything; and as he, apparently in sport, insisted on receiving money for it, she gave him a ducat. Thereupon he took his leave as quickly as he could, in order to draw from the advocate part of the money deposited. The lawyer opened his eyes wide at the demand: he did not know the young gentleman, he said. Richard pulled the acknowledgment out of his pocket, and found it merely a blank sheet of paper. The advocate had written his receipt with a kind of ink which grew pale, and was totally effaced in a few hours. So the young man had now only about thirty ducats in the world.

Such being the case, Richard felt that he must starve or do something to gain his bread, and he determined to become a pedler. With his thirty ducats he bought and fitted up a box, and carried it through those streets where a few weeks before he had been rioting in wealth. However, his wares were in favour, and he sold them off so quickly, that he hoped, if this went on, to become ere long a rich man again, and to return to Germany happy, especially in his escape from the accursed bottle-imp. With such thoughts, he repaired in the evening to a tavern to rest himself, and put down his box. A curious guest said to him: 'What strange creature have you got there, fellow, in that phial, that tumbles about so queerly?' Alas! he perceived that among his other purchases he had unawares retaken the bottle-imp. He offered it eagerly to each of the company for three-pence—he himself had paid for it but four—but none would take so ugly and useless a thing; and as he persisted in pressing his worthless wares on them, they pushed him, box, bottle, and all, out at the door.

Richard in despair fled out of the city, and did not rest till he had quitted the Venetian territory, the scene where all his woes had begun. A horror seized him of all great cities; he knew not what to do, or where to get rid of his inseparable companion. At length he determined to become a soldier, hoping easily to part with his wretched bargain in the camp. He heard that two Italian states were at war with each other, and prepared to attach himself to either side. So, having drawn again on his inexhaustible bank, he arrayed himself in a rich gold-wrought cuirass, a splendid plumed hat, two first-rate light guns, a bright polished sword, and two daggers, and mounted on a Spanish steed, rode forth with three well-armed followers on good horses.

Such a combatant, and one, too, who desired no pay, was sure to be welcome in any army; and Richard soon found himself in a camp, where he lived very comfortably, and in wine and play seemed to have forgotten his anxieties. Sharpened by former ill success, he took care not to offer his bottle-imp too formally for sale, but saying nothing about it, waited to make the bargain unexpectedly, as if in jest.

One morning the call to arms was heard; the whole forces were collected; and in a little while the plain was seen full of the infantry of both parties, engaged in hot action, while the cavalry were drawn up apart. The horse of the enemy, being inferior in number, retreated before the superior force, and for a while Richard enjoyed himself wonderfully, caracoling on his splendid horse, his weapons rattling, and himself in safety. But presently, infantry and cavalry began to mingle in general affray; musket-balls hissed around; horsemen fell, and as, strengthened by large reinforcements, the enemy's horse came down upon them, Richard thought, 'What a fool I was to come here! I am much nearer death than I was on my sick-bed, and if one of those hissing balls catches me, then I am the prey of the bottle-imp and his master for ever!' Just as he was thus thinking, his Spanish horse was seized with a panic, and went rearing and plunging backwards till they reached a wood not far off. He spurred him about under the lofty trees till he became exhausted, and stood still. Then he dismounted, took off cuirass and shoulder-belt, unsaddled the horse, and feebly stretching himself in the grass, said: 'Well, I am scarcely fit for a soldier, at least with a bottle-imp in my pocket.' He tried to think of what next to do, but fell fast asleep.

After some hours of quiet slumber, a sound of men's voices and footsteps struck his ear; but nestling in his cool, comfortable couch, and resolutely indifferent to the noise, he was sinking still deeper into delicious sleep, when a thundering voice shouted to him: 'Are

"you dead, you scoundrel? Only speak if you are, that one may not waste a charge of powder." Thus unpleasantly awakened, he looked up, and saw a musket cocked at his breast, held by a grim-looking foot-soldier, while others were rifling his property. He begged for mercy, crying in the utmost anguish, "if they would shoot him dead, that at least they should first buy the little phial in his right-hand doublet pocket."

"Stupid fellow," laughed one of them, "I won't buy it from you, but take it from you certainly;" and so he drew out the imp, and put it in his breast.

"And welcome!" cried Richard, "if you can only keep it; but unpaid for, it won't stay by you." The soldiers laughed, and went off with the plunder, not troubling themselves further about the man, whom they took to be half crazy. Richard felt in his pocket, and found the phial there; he shouted, and held it up after them. The man who had taken it, in astonishment clutched at his dress, found it not, and ran back for it.

"I told you," said Richard, "you couldn't keep it so. Only give me a few pence for it."

The soldier now took a fancy to the frolicsome thing, which now, too, as was its custom when handled, shewed itself very lively in the expectation of the approaching close of its service. But the threepence charged for it seemed to the soldier too much; so Richard said impatiently: "Well, skinfint, as you will; give me a penny, and take your property." Thus was the bargain concluded, the money paid, and the little Satan handed over.

Richard now bethought himself what to do. He stood there with a light heart, but with a light pocket too, and no means of filling it, for he dared not return to the corps of cavalry from which he had shamefully fled; so he proposed to these foot-soldiers to join their company. He soon discovered that they belonged to the opposite side, where he would not be known; and now, that he was rid of the bottle-imp and all his cash, he felt not indisposed to risk his life for the chance of booty. He went then with his new comrades to the camp; and the captain willingly received into his company an active and strongly made young fellow like him.

His life, however, was not very cheerful. There was at present a suspension of proceedings in the field, and nothing to do but to live quietly in the camp, without danger and without plunder. Richard had therefore nothing but his scanty pay; and one day it occurred to him, as he weighed the petty sum in his hands, to try his fortune with the dice.

The game took its usual checkered course, and he went on gambling and drinking far into the night. At length the half-intoxicated Richard had played away his whole month's pay, and no one would lend him a farthing. Rummaging in all his pockets, he found nothing there but his cartridge-box; but this he drew out, and offered it as a stake. Whilst the dice were being shaken, it suddenly struck Richard that the soldier who held the stake was the same who had bought the bottle-imp, and would of course, through its presence, be sure to win. He cried "Stop!" but too late; the dice were thrown, and Richard lost. He rushed back to his tent in despair. A comrade, who was somewhat more sober than he, took him by the arm, and asked him on the way if he had more cartridges in his tent.

"No," said Richard, "or I would have played on."

"So you can when you've bought new ones," said the soldier; "for the commissioner comes to review us next month, and if he finds a soldier without cartridges, he has him shot."

"Next month!" cried Richard; "well, before that time I shall have my pay, and buy new cartridges."

So they parted, and Richard proceeded to sleep off his intoxication.

But in a little while he was awake by the voice of

the corporal before the tent: "Ho! to-morrow is the review; the commissioner will be in the camp by break of day." Richard was startled from his sleep: he thought of his cartridges. He called to his comrades in the tent to know if any would lend to him; but they abused him for a drunkard, and would not answer. Then he searched his clothes, and found at last five farthings. With these he flew from tent to tent in the dark, trying to buy cartridges, but in vain, till he reached a tent where the voice that answered him with an imprecation was that of the soldier who had won his cartridges.

"Comrade," cried Richard pleadingly, "you or some one must help me. You plundered me once before, and yesterday you took my all from me. If the commissioner finds to-morrow that I have no cartridges, he will have me shot. You must give, or lend, or sell me some."

"Giving and lending I have forsworn," said the soldier; "but to quiet you, I will sell you cartridges. How much money have you?"

"Five farthings," answered Richard sadly.

"Well," said the other, "to shew you that I am a good comrade, there are five cartridges for your five farthings."

The exchange was made, and Richard returned, to sleep till the morning.

The review took place, and all went well. But when the soldiers were again in camp, the sun burned intolerably through the tent-canvas. Richard's comrades went to the canteen, and he remained alone with empty pockets and a piece of ration-bread, faint and sick with yesterday's carouse and to-day's exertions. "Ah," he thought, "if I had now but one of all the ducats I once lavished like a fool!" Scarcely had he formed the wish, when a bright new ducat lay in his left hand. The thought of the bottle-imp shot through his mind, and imbittered his momentary joy at sight of the piece of gold. Just then entered the comrade who had sold him the cartridges.

"Friend," said he, with a troubled air, "the phial with the little black imp in it—you know I bought it in the wood from you—is missing. Have I, perchance, given it up unwares, for a cartridge? I had wrapped it up in paper like them, and laid it with my cartridges."

Richard sought anxiously in his cartridge-box, and in the first paper he unfolded, he found the goblin creature.

"That's well," said the soldier. "I should have been sorry to have lost the thing, ugly as it looks: it always seems to me as if it brought me unusual luck at play. There, comrade, take your farthing again, and give me the creature."

Most eagerly did Richard consent to the transaction, and they parted. But all his peace was gone since he had again seen and handled the object of his terror. He threw from him the ducat he had just before sighed for, and at last the dread that the bottle-imp might still be lurking somewhere near, drove him out of the camp, and through the deepening evening, into the thickest forest shades, where, exhausted by terror and weariness, he sank upon the ground.

"Oh," said he panting, "that I had but a water-flask to quench my thirst!" and there stood a water-flask at his side. He thought of the bottle-imp—searched in his pocket—and felt it there.

He fell back in a swoon, on awaking from which he would have resisted his fate, declaring that it belonged no more to him, but the imp seemed to cry jeeringly: "Thou hast bought me for a farthing; and thou must sell me again for less, or the bargain is void."

Half mad, he flung the phial against a rock hard by, but felt it again in his pocket. Then he began to run through the dark thicket, striking himself against

tree and stone in the gloom, and hearing at every step the flask jingle in his pocket. Daybreak found him in an open plain, and he continued his wanderings. He would not return to the camp; his one object now was to find a coin under a farthing's worth; but the search was vain. He would demand nothing more of the goblin, and so he begged his way through the land of Italy. But looking so wild and troubled, and always asked for half-farthings, he was everywhere regarded as crazy, and was soon known far and wide by the name of the mad Half-farthinger.

Many months had passed thus, when one day he found himself in the midst of wild mountains, and sat, still and sorrowful, beside a little rill, which, trickling down through a wild growth of bushes, appeared compassionately offering itself for his refreshment. Then there rang, loud and strong, over the rocky ground, the sound of horses' hoofs, and on a large, black, wild-looking horse there came a very tall man of hideous visage, in a gorgeous blood-red dress, up to the spot where Richard sat. 'Why so gloomy, fellow?' said he to the youth, whose breast sank with a strange foreboding. 'I should guess you to be a merchant. Have you bought anything too dear?'

'Ah, no—rather too cheap,' answered Richard in a low, trembling voice.

'So it appears to me, my good merchant!' cried the horseman, with a frightful laugh. 'And have you, perchance, such a thing to sell as a bottle-imp? Or am I mistaken in taking you for the mad Half-farthinger?'

Scarcely could the pale lips of the poor youth utter a low 'Yes—I am he,' under the momentary expectation that the horseman's mantle would turn to blood-dripping wings, that black spectral pinions, blazing with hell-fire, would sprout forth on his horse, and carry him away to the abodes of eternal torture; but the tall stranger addressed him in a rather milder voice, and with less frightful gestures.

'I see for whom you take me,' said he; 'but be comforted; I am not he. Perhaps I may even deliver you from him, for I have been many days seeking you, to buy your bottle-imp. To be sure, you gave terribly little for it, and I myself don't know how to get at a smaller coin. But listen. On the other side of the mountain dwells a prince, a wild young fellow. To-morrow, I will contrive to allure him away from his hunting-train, and set a hideous wild beast upon him. Do you stay here till midnight, and then go, just when the moon stands over that jagged rock, shining through the dark cleft to the left. Go at a moderate pace; linger not, hurry not, and you will come to the spot just when the monster has the prince under his claws. Seize it fearlessly, and it must yield to you, and to make its escape, plunge down the steep bank into the sea. Then beg of the grateful prince that he will have a couple of half-farthings struck for you; I will give you change for them, and then for one the bottle-imp will be mine.'

So spoke the horseman, and, without waiting for an answer, rode slowly back into the wood.

'But where shall I find you when I have the half-farthings?' cried Richard after him.

'At the Black Fountain,' answered the horseman: 'any old woman here can tell you where it lies; and with slow but long strides the hideous horse bore away his hideous rider. Richard, who had nothing more to lose, resolved to put his advice into execution.

The night fell; the moon rose and hung with a lurid red light over the indicated point of rock. Then the pale wanderer arose trembling, and stepped into the dark ravine. Joyless enough, and gloomy it looked, with only a rare moonbeam here and there, looking in over its lofty walls; there was, too, in that closed-in place, a damp earthy exhalation, as of a charnel-vault; but else nothing unpleasant was to be discerned. As

it was, Richard did not feel himself tempted to linger, but was rather inclined to hurry on. This too, however, he refrained from, faithful to the horseman's directions; and after some hours, the faint red light of morning glimmered on his dark path, and a fresh cheering breeze played on his face. But just as he stepped out of the deep ravine, and sought to enjoy the fresh forest scenery, and the blue glitter of the sea which lay spread not far from him, he was disturbed by a wild cry; he looked round, and saw a frightful beast, under whose claws on the ground lay a young man in rich hunting-attire. Richard's first impulse was to run and help; but when he looked full at the beast, and saw that it resembled a monstrous ape, with a formidable pair of stag's horns, all courage left him, and, in spite of the prostrate man's miserable cry for help, he was about to creep back into his chasm; but the next instant he suddenly recalled what the horseman had told him, and urged by his own especial danger, he ran up with his club-stick to the monster, which, rolling the huntsman in its claws, seemed about to toss him up, and then catch him on its horns. But as Richard advanced, it let its prey drop, and with hideous howlings ran away. Richard, grown bold, pursued it till it plunged from the lofty cliffs, still grinning at him with its abominable visage, and vanished under the waves.

And now the young man went back triumphantly to the rescued huntsman, who, according to his expectation, announced himself as the reigning prince of the country, and pronouncing a eulogium upon his deliverer as a true hero, prayed him to demand some recompense, the highest he could pay him.

'Ay?' said Richard hopefully, 'are you in earnest? Then, all I request is, in God's name, that you will have a couple of half-farthings struck in good coin for me. I ask for only a couple.'

The prince gazed on him in astonishment, till some of his retinue came up, and, on hearing from him what had happened, one of them recognised in Richard the crazy Half-farthinger whom he had once seen. The prince began to laugh, and poor Richard embraced his knees in anguish, vowing that without the half-farthings he should be undone.

The prince, still laughing, answered: 'Stand up then, fellow; you have my princely word; and if you insist on it, I will have as many half-farthings struck as you wish for. But if the third of a farthing will do as well, no new coinage will be wanted, for my border neighbours maintain my farthings to be so light that three of them go to one of theirs.'

'If that be so'—said Richard doubtfully.

'Faith,' said the prince, 'you will be the first to whom they seem too good. But if that makes any difficulty, herewith I give you my most solemn word to have still worse ones struck for you—provided that be possible.'

Thereupon he bade a whole bagful of farthings be given to Richard; who immediately ran off, as if he were pursued, to the frontier, and was a happier man than he had been for long, when, in the first tavern of the neighbouring country, he was grudgingly paid a common farthing for three of those he brought, which he thus exchanged by way of trial. Then he inquired for the Black Fountain, and some children who were playing in the tavern straight ran screaming away. The host told him, not without a shudder, that this was an ill-famed spot, from which many evil spirits came out into the country, and which few people had actually seen. This he knew, however, that the approach to it was not far from here, being a cavern with two blasted cypresses before it; and no one could miss the way who once went in: but God preserve him and all true Christians from that!

These words terrified Richard; but the venture must be made, and he set forth on his way. Already

from far he saw the black and horrible cavern; the two cypresses seemed to have been blasted as if by terror of the ghastly abyss, which he saw, as he came nearer, held in its hollow a strange heap of rocks. They looked like distorted, long-bearded, goblin faces, some of which resembled that monstrous ape on the sea-shore; but when steadily regarded, they became again only jagged and rifted fragments of rock. He entered tremblingly among these stone-phantoms. The bottle-imp in his pocket grew so heavy, it seemed trying to pull him back; but that raised his courage; 'for,' thought he, 'what it does not like, is just what I must like.' Deeper in the cavern the darkness became so intense, that he could no longer see those frightful shapes, and had to feel carefully before him with a stick; but he found nothing save a smooth floor of fine moss, and, but for a strange whistling and croaking which passed at times through the cavern, he would have dismissed all fear.

At last he had passed through, and found himself in a desolate hollow, enclosed on all sides by the mountains. On one side he saw the great, terrible black horse, standing like an iron statue, unbound, with head held high, without grazing or stirring a limb. Opposite him gushed out of the rocks a spring, in which the horseman was washing his hands and face; but the water was black as ink; and when the gigantic being turned round to Richard, his hideous face was of a negro blackness, frightfully contrasting with his gorgeous red attire.

'Don't tremble, young fellow,' said he; 'this is one of the ceremonies I am compelled to perform. So, too, whenever I need a new dress, I have to mix its purple with a good number of drops from my own blood, whereby it gets that splendid colour. In short, I am bound body and soul, beyond all chance of redemption. And what do you think I get for that? Only a hundred thousand pieces of gold a year. I can't make that do, so I want to buy your bottle-imp, and thus play the old miser a trick. And he began to laugh, so that the rocks resounded, and even the hitherto motionless black horse started.

'Well,' he asked, turning again to Richard, 'do you bring half-farthings, comrade?'

'I am not your comrade,' answered Richard, half confused, half testy, as he opened his bag.

'Oh, we are proud, are we?—but have a care, my fine gentleman! Who set the monster on the prince, that you might conquer it?'

'There was no need of all that jugglery,' said Richard; and he related how the prince already struck not only half-farthings, but the third part of farthings. The red man appeared out of humour at having given himself the trouble for nothing. However, he changed one good farthing against three bad ones, gave Richard one of these, and received in return the bottle-imp, which felt very heavy coming out of his pocket, lying curled up, sullen and sad, at the bottom of the phial. The rider again laughed violently.

'That won't help thee, Satan,' cried he; 'give me gold here, as much as my horse can carry;' and forthwith the huge beast groaned under the burden of gold; yet he took his master up again, and like a fly crawling up the wall, stepped right up the perpendicular rock, but with such hideous movements and contortions, that Richard fled back into the cavern, that he might see no more of them.

When he had come out on the other side of the mountain, and run a good way beyond the abyss, then, for the first time, did the whole consciousness of his deliverance strike on his mind. Now at length he felt the evil spirit's hold over him gone, and the pressure of unspeakable misery removed, and a true penitence for his former wild and sinful life touched his heart. His joy at his release was tempered by that penitence, and sanctified by a firm determination to lead a new life; and in this determination, and the carrying on of it, his

former cheerful heart returned. With all his renovated strength and spirit, he bent himself to run a good sober and honourable course; and in this he succeeded so well, that, after some years of honest labour, he was able to return as a well-to-do merchant to the dear German land, where he married; and where in his old age he frequently told his grandchildren, as a useful warning, the story of the Bottle-imp.

STATE AND PROSPECTS OF CRIME.

LET no one depreciate the series of experiments now going on in prison-reform. Whether successful or unsuccessful, they are a proof that the thought of the nation has taken a wholesome and generous direction, and they afford something like a certainty that truth will at length be elicited even from the collision of errors. The reformatory schools, and other philanthropical institutions for the reception of juvenile criminals, form also a noble feature of the time: but we have already sufficiently felicitated ourselves on our praiseworthy doings—it seems now desirable that we should turn our attention to results, with the view of ascertaining whether these steps are really enough of themselves to affect triumphantly the balance of crime. Mr Mayhew's description of the prisons of London,* as we have remarked on a former occasion, is exceedingly suggestive on all such subjects; but on the present one, it likewise embodies such statistics as are necessary to form the basis of the speculation.

At the outset, we are struck with the fact, that the number of juvenile offenders received at the principal reformatory asylums of London—thirteen in number—is so small, as compared with the number of offenders committed to prison within the time, as hardly to promise any appreciable effect. The total number of boys, under seventeen years of age, committed to the House of Correction, Tothill Fields, during the five years ending Michaelmas 1851, amounted to 7763, while only 263 were received into the reformatory asylums. Of this small proportion—only 3½ per cent.—the Redhill School in those five years took only 23.

This may seem to throw some light upon the next great fact, that in the decennial ending 1843, the proportion of habitual criminals to every 10,000 of the people was 13·1, and in the same period ending 1853, it was 12·5. The slight difference between these amounts is what we have gained by all our late philanthropical exertions. As for the casual criminals, they were at the same periods 3· and 2·7, shewing a balance in favour of reformation of only ·3.

How is our criminal population, of the habitual sort, kept up? One-fourth part of it remains steady, for that is the proportion of recommitments in all England; and the rest is made up by a new crop constantly springing up. The career of a professional thief is said to be limited, on the average, to six years, out of which he spends four months a year in prison; so that the rapid growth and rank luxuriance of the new crop are something astounding. The reformation of these professionals, according to Mr Mayhew, is well-nigh hopeless; and the older they are in years, the smaller is their chance. That is, older in comparison, for your habitual criminal is rarely above twenty-five. From seventeen to twenty-five is the period most prolific in crime; below seventeen, down to six, we get the recruits who take the place of the superannuated or transported; and above twenty-five are found, for the

* *Great World of London*. By Henry Mayhew. London: Bogue, 1856.

most part, those of the casual criminals, who proceed theoretically, not empirically like the others, and whose booty, in distinguished cases, is calculated in thousands and hundreds of thousands.

It follows, from these details, that it is among the juvenile criminals, whose ages end at seventeen, the stream of philanthropy should be turned to give it any chance of success; and it is precisely there we pique ourselves on acting most energetically. We have ragged schools, and schools of fifty other denominations, for the little desperadoes of this wild population, and we fancy that moral and industrial—to say nothing of religious—teaching is all that is necessary to convert them into useful and respectable citizens. We have prisons, likewise, in which the same kind of training is pursued, and in which a taste for comfort is insinuated into the minds of the young savages of civilisation by means of warm, wholesome, and comfortable meals, a snug dormitory, and the methodical alternation of work and exercise; and we think there must be some mistake in the figures when we are told that the whole change we have produced for the better is hardly worthy of notice.

Where the mistake really is, however, becomes obvious enough if we only reflect that all these boys, when done with school or prison, have a home of one kind or other to return to. They belong to a particular class or tribe of human beings; they have acquaintances and associates of their own; and to the rest of the world, if only on account of their antecedents, they are and must be strangers. Their location in the town they inhabit is probably not a wholesome one, either physically or morally. Many of them are orphans, and many fortunate in being so; for it is not the young children of the 'respectable' whom the magistrates convict of throwing stones or similar misdemeanours, otherwise the entire population of our juvenile schools would find themselves very suddenly transferred to the houses of correction. These liberated scholars or prisoners find nothing to induce them to keep up their new learning, or their civilised habits; and as for the comfort they have been accustomed to in jail, that only serves as something to contrast with their present misery and destitution, and reconcile them to the idea of going back to the pleasant bondage for a few months more. The picture drawn by Mr Mayhew of the liberation of the boy-prisoners from Tothill Fields, is not merely affecting—it makes the blood run cold. Their true punishment seems only then to be beginning. Before being conducted to the gate, they were stripped of the warm comfortable prison-garb, and now stood shivering in their own ragged and scanty apparel. 'One was without a jacket, and another had his coat pinned up, so as to hide the want of a waistcoat.' On the names being called out from the office, a little boy stepped forward, his head scarcely reaching above the sill. His crime was robbing his mother: no mother came to reclaim her son. The next boy was an old offender; nobody came for him. The next was in for breaking the windows of an old deserted factory with stones.

'Anybody there for this boy?'

'No, sir; nobody,' replied the warder. When the ceremony was over, the word was given, 'Let them all go;' and the outer gate being opened, the boy-criminals were once more at large. One of them had his brother, and two others—all fustian-dressed, and sinister-looking in appearance—to meet him: the rest looked round, as if with a vague idea of seeing some face they knew. There was no face they knew. '*Of all the young creatures discharged that morning, not a father, nor a mother, nor even a grown and decent friend was there to receive them!*' And so the outcasts went off in a gang, in company with the fustian jackets. Whither? To whom? To what home? God help them!

And God help us, for thus the strength of the land is suffered to turn into weakness. Mr Mayhew has no misgivings about the measure required for the abatement of the evil. In the teeth of the political economists, he says: 'There is but one way to empty our prisons, and that is by paying attention to the outcast children of the land. So long as the state forgets its paternal duty, just so long must it expect its offspring to grow up vicious and dishonest; and it is simply for our wicked neglect of the poor desolate and destitute little creatures about us, that our country swarms with what are termed "the dangerous classes," and our people, tested by the national records, appear to be more than sevenfold as criminal as our Catholic neighbours in France and Belgium. For it is plain that if the state would but become the foster-father of the wretched little orphans that now it leaves magistrates to thrust into jail, and if it would but train them to habits of industry and rectitude, instead of allowing them to grow up utterly unskilled in any form of honest labour, and, moreover, thoroughly ignorant of all rights and duties, as well as being not only insensible to the dignities and virtues of life, but positively taught to believe that the admirable lies in all that is base and hideous.' To this plan there are sundry well-known objections. If the duty of the state were limited to merely rendering industrial education compulsory on all the children of the poorer classes, it becomes more reasonable and more feasible. The evil is—and that evil will always remain without the element of legal compulsion—that, notwithstanding the efforts of private philanthropy, the great majority of the poor children are left in a state of savagism. So long as this is the case, such praiseworthy efforts are of comparatively little use, for the individuals, rescued for a moment, return, in general, to the mass to which they belong, and which contains their blood-relations and associates—in fact, the only acquaintances they have on the earth.

It is a received axiom, that if a civilised man is turned among savages, he becomes a savage, and that if a savage is absorbed in a population of civilised men, he becomes a civilised man. On this fact rests the whole question of the reformation of juvenile criminals. The social class to which they belong must be changed in habits by means of industrial education—that is, the idle and brutally ignorant must cease to be the great majority—or they themselves, when liberated from prison, must be prevented from again mixing with their old associates. The former of these two plans is the better, for it dries up in some measure the sources of habitual crime; while the latter, although it may lead to the reformation of existing criminals, leaves *in statu quo* the nursery from which their vacant places are supplied. It is not only the better, but it would be the more popular, since it interferes less with what we are all so justly jealous of, the liberty of the subject. To compel a liberated prisoner to renounce the associates of his heretofore life, is virtually to extend his punishment to transportation from the only part of the habitable world he recognises as his home and country; while to render common industrial education compulsory on the children of the dregs of the people, is nothing more than a measure of police necessary to enable them to perform their duty as members of the community to which they belong. To leave these children to their own devices and the brutal apathy of their parents, is to rear knowingly within the state a brood of *entozoa*, destined to prey upon its vitals, and yet entitled by the laws to its protection and nourishment.

That neglect and associates are the great producers of habitual crime, is shewn by the fact, that the majority of the professional thieves of London are Irish-Cockneys, and the majority of the inmates of

the boys' prison at Tothill Fields, the rising generation of the same tribe. The low Irish are remarkable for their gregarious disposition, for their habit of clustering together like a colony, even in a great city; and those of the class we are treating of belong in general, women as well as men, to the street-trades, which leave home a mere sleeping-place, and family superintendence an impossibility. Surely it would be no tyrannical interference, no unwise coddling on the part of government, to sweep the children of these parents, the offscourings of the most villainous lanes of London, into some public institution, and to compel the parents to contribute a portion of their daily allowance for alcohol to their education. To shew the spirit of the London thief, brought up to nothing, and taking to roguery *con amore*, we may quote a few lines from Mr Mayhew. They occur in his examination of a boy-prisoner 'with a frank and open countenance, and no signs of London roguery impressed on his features.' The boy was ten times in prison before, and gave an account of his misdoings as if they were the ordinary details of a trade.

'We next inquired as to what he intended to do when he regained his liberty once more.

"Do?" he answered, without the least fear, though the warder stood at his side. "Why, when I gets out here, I shall go thieving again."

"But why?" we asked.

"Why, I shall go thieving, cos I ain't got no other way of gettin' a living."

"But won't your father keep you?" said we.

"Oh! father," echoed the boy in a tone of disrespect; "he'll think he's got enough to do to keep his-self."

"Would he turn you from his door, then?" was our next question.

"O no; he wouldn't turn me out. He'd give me a lodging and 'vittles'; and if I got any work, he'd do all he could to help me; but, you see, I don't like work, and I don't like being at home neither. I seem to like thieving."

We have already spoken of crime as a regular profession, and stated that casual criminals form but a small portion of the entire body. Some curious details are given in illustration of this fact. The profession, indeed, is a very intricate one, and no proficiency can be attained in it without hard study and a perfect knowledge of its principles. The burglar, for instance, does not do his work alone: he must be in connection with 'putters-up,' to plan the robbery, with companions to aid him, and 'fences' to receive the stolen property. A coiner must be acquainted with the places where he can obtain his apparatus and materials, and with 'smashers' to pass his manufacture upon the public. Even a pickpocket goes out with a 'stall' to cover him while he is doing the deed, and with others to whom to pass the purse when it is taken. It is calculated that a well-trained mobster commits about six robberies in the day, or on the average fifty in a week, and not less than 1000 for one detection! To crush this profession, then, is of some consequence; and it has been shewn that as the reformation of habitual criminals is the next thing to hopeless, the only plan open to philanthropy is to nip it in the bud. Mr Mayhew thinks private philanthropy inadequate to effect this object, and would bring in the strong hand of government. We demur to the doctrine, as concerns an entire adoption of the children of the dangerous classes by the state; but in respect of compulsory education and training to callings, we believe that the law in connection with philanthropic effort might usefully employ some portion of its means and its power. We repeat, if the growth of crime is to be checked, we would require, as a matter of police, to sweep from the streets every variety of vagrant and wholly or partially neglected children—sending them to school at the expense of

parents, or, if need be, the parish; and not waiting till the wretched urchins have begun a course of vice. This plan may be called harsh, unconstitutional, and so forth. Be it so. The alternative is before us—a host of criminals, the torment of society, and the repression of whom by ordinary and so-called punishments has, from present appearances, signally failed.

CHRISTMAS-EVE AT THE GERMAN BLIND ASYLUM.

CHRISTMAS-EVE, as is now well known, is the great day of all the year in Germany; it is the festival looked forward to, and prepared for by all classes, and celebrated in every family, every institution or community. It is, however, with especial reference to Christ's appearance on earth in the form of a child, more particularly regarded as a children's feast; and it is in this light that it assumes its deepest meaning, and acquires its most poetical associations. On the birthday of the Holy Child—the pattern of childish purity, the guardian of childish innocence, and the preacher of childlike humility—all the little ones of His flock are to be made glad; are to *feel*, even before they can understand or appreciate it, how intimately His spirit is connected with all their joys. Therefore, wherever children are united, either by the ties of relationship, the claims of education, or the bonds of benevolence, there the tree burns more brightly, the gifts are more numerous and varied, the mirth louder, and the surprise more startling. From the princes and princesses in the palace, down to the pauper-child in the workhouse, every little German heart beats with joyful anticipation at the approach of Christmas-eve.

The images impressed on the mind by this festival remain engraven there for life, and are associated with the tenderest and brightest recollections of childhood. The grown-up son, who has for years been absent from his German home, still recalls the happy scene of former days, whenever Christmas-eve comes round: he contrives, if possible, to send his parents some trifle to swell the amount of surprises, or at anyrate, calculates carefully that his letter of affection and congratulation may arrive on that day. On that day the aged mother thinks of her children scattered abroad in the world, and not without melancholy dwells on the past, when she assembled them all round the lighted tree, and was the minister of their greatest joys. On that day many a heart that has sought a home in other lands, and is fain to own them a more prosperous abode, longs to be once more amidst the merry groups in his German home, singing German songs, eating German fare, enjoying the cordial hospitality, the unrestrained cheerfulness of German society.

It was not till a few years ago that I had an opportunity of witnessing this season in all its true German bearings, and became aware how intimately the interest connected with it pervades every phase of society in Germany. For weeks before Christmas, every household is busy planning, calculating, purchasing, not to mention baking and brewing. She has to find out the wants and wishes of husband, children, and servants, and secretly endeavours to provide for their gratification when the great day arrives. The younger members of the family have each their secrets, and have their hands and heads full of fancy-work of different kinds—slippers, collars, cushions, purses, bell-ropes, and the like—all of which *must* be completed before Christmas. Every tradesman knows that his character will suffer if he does not finish the article ordered, and send home the goods on the important day. Every household servant, every labourer's wife, would consider it a crying sin to leave one corner of the house unscrubbed, one window uncleaned, for the grand occasion.

Many public institutions, in which active benevolence is busy to supply things domestic poverty

denies, afford an interesting spectacle on this day, and might invite a numerous crowd of visitors, were not almost everybody too busy at home to seek amusement abroad. As a stranger, and desirous of seeing the peculiar features of the country, I gladly availed myself of an opportunity offered me to witness the *Becheerring*, or distribution of Christmas presents at the Blind Asylum. This took place at half-past four o'clock in the afternoon; and as I walked with a friend through the town, we could not but notice the unusual air of business and expectancy that pervaded every countenance we met. There strode a peasant-woman carrying a heavy laden bag and basket, and, moreover, a prettily ornamented stand for tapers laid over her shoulder. Here came a gentleman holding an ill-concealed flower-vase or other ornament for his lady's table. There again walked a poor man, with a small fir-tree in one hand, and some toys just bought at the fair in the other. On arriving at the asylum, which is situated just outside the town, we were shewn into a large hall, containing at one end a few benches for visitors, whilst the greater part was left open for the reception of the inmates of the asylum. Opposite the door stood a tree, not brilliantly illuminated, yet supplying the principal light of the apartment. Along the whole of one side of the hall were arranged narrow tables, completely covered with various articles prepared for the blind children; and at one end stood an organ. Soon after we had taken our seats on one of the benches, the inmates of the asylum were admitted, about forty in number. As they came in, almost all seemed to have sufficient perception of light to be attracted by the lighted tree, and to turn their eyes involuntarily in that direction. No doubt their imaginations had been worked upon by previous description, for many gave signs and gestures of surprise, and even uttered sounds of delight, as they seemed to catch a glimpse of the emblem of the festival. Notwithstanding this excitement, however, they ranged themselves in a perfectly quiet and orderly manner round the organ, the girls on one side, the boys on the other, and conducted themselves with the greatest propriety. After them came in the director, or head manager of the institution, and took his place at an elevated reading-desk. At a signal given by him, the organ, at which one of the blind youths was seated, struck up a hymn, joined by the voices of all the children, who performed this and several other pieces in a very superior manner, not only keeping their parts with perfect correctness, but putting much feeling and spirit into their songs.

The blind are remarked to be often gifted with a fine musical ear, and their voices are also very often rich and mellow, and capable of high cultivation. In this institution, music is regarded as one of the prime levers for improving and civilising these unfortunate children; and infinite pains are taken to procure them the best instruction, and to make them familiar with the best compositions. The pieces, on this occasion, were admirably chosen, being of a solemn yet animated character; there were some short portions of the *Messiah*, and at last, a beautiful fragment of Schiller's *Song of the Bell*—namely, the prayer for peace. Between the songs came an interesting little episode: a little girl, dressed in white, and shewing by her whole bearing that she belonged to a different class of society from her companions in misfortune, was brought forward by the director, to whom she clung with affectionate bashfulness, and repeated a pretty little verse in a clear and sweet voice. She did not belong to the asylum, but living in the neighbourhood, was sent there at stated times to enjoy some of the instruction, peculiarly adapted to her condition, and in her infantine helplessness, seemed to attract the sympathy and interest of all. I was much struck by the earnest composure evident in the deportment of all the

young performers. These poor children, freed from the disturbing influence caused by the sight of new faces and varied objects, seemed wholly engrossed with the task they had in hand, and stood perfectly still, the words and notes of their songs as present to their mind's eye as if they had been able to read them off from a book. I cannot say, however, that their appearance was pleasing, so far as external form is concerned; they are, for the most part, unhappy beings, rescued from filth and misery, whose affliction has arisen out of the neglect or ill treatment of vicious, ignorant, or brutal parents; therefore, their whole aspect often denotes a sickly constitution, and their awkward figure and ungainly movements bear the stamp of a rude origin, whilst their very homely attire is not calculated to add any grace to their exterior. Nevertheless it was highly interesting to see the wonderful effect that music can produce in elevating the mind, and even the expression, and to listen to the clear, soft, and deep tones proceeding from those clumsy forms, and speaking of a soul alive to nobility of sentiment.

The singing having ceased, the director—a short plain little man, with a finely developed brow and bright twinkling eyes—read a brief address, suitable for the season, concluding with a prayer; and then, descending from his rostrum, he proceeded, with the aid of the teachers connected with the institution, and a lady who has the superintendence of the domestic department, to lead the children to the tables spread for them, and at which a certain space was marked off and numbered for each recipient. Poor things! they could see nothing of the various objects laid out before them—the bright colour or the delicate pattern could not attract their attention or gratify their sense; yet they were, I am well assured, at that hour as happy as any children possessing all the power of sight could possibly be. Loud were the shouts of joy, as they spread their hands over their portion of the table, and caught hold of new and unexpected treasures; then was there clapping of hands, beating of breasts, jumping, and merry peals of laughter whenever a new discovery was made amid the heap.

The gifts had been selected with wonderful discretion and adaptation to the peculiar exigencies of the case. All the other senses were to be gratified, since sight was denied, so there were whistles and fifes, Pan's pipes and drums, bells and Jews-harps, for the hearing; scented soaps, scent-bottles, and bags, for the smell; ginger-bread, apples, and nuts, for the taste; smooth round balls and polished marbles, for the touch. Nothing seemed to give more universal pleasure than these last—little boys and great girls seemed alike to delight in rubbing them between their hands, stroking them against their faces, and kissing them with their lips. The musical instruments were immediately put into action, so that the din of varied discordant sounds became quite deafening. Strange to say, the eatables were regarded with less interest than any other object, and I did not see a single child devouring greedily its cake or sweets. Clothing being provided by the establishment, necessary articles of dress are not distributed at this season; but only little extras, that appear rather in the light of luxuries, are admitted amongst the Christmas-gifts. Warm comforters, muffetees, and gloves, and a pair of elastic garters, fell to many a one's share, and loud were the expressions of joy elicited by their discovery. The elder girls also had collars and neck-ribbons to be worn on state occasions, and shewed, by the eager pleasure with which they examined them, that even want of sight does not render the sex insensible to the charms of finery. One girl asked me what colour her ribbon was; and when I replied that it was blue, 'Oh,' she exclaimed, 'that is my favourite colour!' yet she had never had any perception of colour. Perhaps she had heard that the heavens are blue, and identified this colour with the beauties of that place.

The younger children had various toys—ninepins, tops, carts, dolls, &c.—and almost every one owned a basket of some kind. One end of the long table was set out for a few elderly pensioners, who had been admitted for life into the asylum. These also had their share of presents, and shewed their satisfaction in a calmer but not less gratifying manner. One old woman was especially delighted with a little tureen or covered basin, that had fallen to her lot, and in which, as she told us, she was every day to fetch her dinner from the kitchen. She felt it all over, admired the smoothness of its surface, and the symmetry of its form, and was never tired of taking off and putting on the cover, which fitted so nicely. She had also received a bag, and, in spite of her blindness, did not fail to call upon us to admire the prettiness of the pattern and the harmony of the colours. The director, the teachers, and the lady before mentioned—a most pleasing, active, little woman—went about among the party, sympathising with each, and pointing out the uses and beauties of the various articles, the director especially evincing, by his kind and paternal tone, and the different manner in which he addressed himself to different individuals, the warm affectionate interest he felt for all, and the insight he had gained into the character of each. The visitors also were permitted to walk about and inspect everything, yet the children appeared to feel not the slightest restraint, but gave free vent to their joy in a perfectly natural manner.

When ample time had been allowed them for examining all they had received, they were marshalled out of the room again, laden with their newly acquired riches, which many of them were unable to carry off themselves; and as they walked past him, the director again spoke a word of encouragement or sympathy to each, and many a one stopped to press his hand affectionately, and to say once more how delightful had been the treat. We offered our thanks and congratulations to this gentleman, who then explained to us the great value he set on this festival as a means of softening and elevating the character of the unfortunate beings committed to his charge, who often came to him in a state of degradation hardly raised above that of brutes, and required the most careful training to call forth the higher and nobler faculties of their nature. Having heartily wished him further success in his philanthropic labours, we hastened away to the Bescheering awaiting us at home. As we hurried along the now dark streets, it was a pleasure to see an unwonted illumination in most of the houses, in many of which even the little attic windows shewed that something was going on in honour of the holy feast.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

A few important and interesting papers have been read at the meetings of the Royal Society: one communicated by M. Brown Séquard, is on a subject much talked of by physiologists—namely, that muscular fibre can be acted on by light without the aid of nerves. Haller mentions it as a phenomenon that had come under his observation; but later anatomists repudiated the notion, and it dropped into the limbo of forgotten things. It has, however, been quietly resuscitated within the past quarter of a century, and now takes its place among demonstrated facts. M. Brown Séquard is known as a most careful observer; and his experiments prove that some portions of muscular fibre—the iris of the eye, for example—are affected by light, independently of any reflex action of the nerves, thereby confirming former experiences. The effect is produced

by the illuminating rays only—the chemical and heat rays remain neutral. And not least remarkable is the fact, that the iris of an eel shewed itself susceptible of the excitement sixteen days after the eyes were removed from the creature's head. So far as is yet known, this muscle is the only one on which light thus takes effect; and henceforth, the statement that 'muscular fibre may be stimulated without the intervention of nerves,' will have to be received among the truths of physiology.

The Society have held their anniversary meeting, and recognised the merits of certain savans by the award of medals. The Rumford Medal was given to M. Louis Pasteur, of Lille, for his remarkable optical researches; one of the Royal Medals to Professor William Thomson, of Glasgow, for electro-dynamical investigations, which have distinguished him among physical philosophers; the other to Sir John Richardson—the friend and tried companion of arctic Franklin—for his contributions to natural history and physical geography; and the Copley Medal, the honour of honours, to M. Henri Milne-Edwards, of Paris, for his researches in comparative anatomy and zoology.

The last published part of the *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* contains a paper of nearly 300 pages, by Mr Robert Mallet, 'On the Physical Conditions involved in the Construction of Artillery, and on some hitherto unexplained Causes of the Destruction of Cannon in Service.' The series of investigations, of which this paper is the result, was begun while the Russian war was raging, and they shew the hand of a master. Amid much that is dry and technical, there are interesting historical and mechanical details; and we find the structure of iron treated of—the causes of drooping at the muzzle—the molecular condition before and after use—the effects of local expansion by heat—causes of bursting, and fifty other valuable matters. We call attention to the subject, as it involves first-rate scientific considerations which, as experience has shewn, are not to be neglected with impunity. The disposition to adopt Mr Mallet's suggestions is manifest at Woolwich, from the recent trials of artillery; and we shall shortly hear of the battering of one of the floating iron-batteries at Shoeburyness, in which the 'monster gun' will take a part. Sundry adventurous officers have volunteered to remain on board while the firing goes on. Will they wait the result of a monster ball? A rifle-shell has been introduced which, fired from the shoulder, will blow up powder at a distance of 1800 yards.

Opinions are still divided as to the advantage of Mr Bessemer's process for making malleable iron. A trial made at the Llanelli Tinplate Works, proved eminently successful as regards sheet-iron; it would bear 'twice doubling without cracking.' A new method of making steel was tried at Mearns Rennie's works—an Austrian invention—whereby pig-iron granulated in cold water, mixed with crushed ore and peroxide of manganese, is converted into excellent steel. A paper on the two processes is set down for reading at the Society of Arts. No lack of work for the men of iron, especially if they undertake to roll the bars for the Russian railways.

The giving of a gold medal by the Society of Arts to Mr C. W. Williams, for an Essay on the Smoke Nuisance, leads us to express our opinion that we shall never have anything like a clear atmosphere in London till the chimneys of private houses, as well as those of furnaces and steam-boats, are made to consume their own smoke. What is wanted is a grate not less efficient than that recently contrived by Dr Arnott, but less costly, and more suitable for ordinary domestic use. We hear that an approach to this desideratum is already in the market; still there is plenty of room for improvement

and modification. Fortune awaits the inventor who shall produce the required article. We think that the capabilities of fire-clay have not yet been sufficiently tested, and should like to see clay fireplaces all in one piece—to admit of easy fixing—with nothing metallic about them except the bars. The economy of clay over iron is great. The authorities are alive to the question, and a Commission under the Board of Health is appointed to visit some of our midland and northern manufacturing towns, to inquire into, and examine all the smoke-consuming fireplaces they can hear of. If, as is said, coal is about to be discovered near London, the sooner improvements are made the better.

An ingenious application of the 'lazy tongs' has recently been contrived. The apparatus constructed on a large scale, is mounted on wheels for convenience of transport, and by turning a winch, may be raised to full height, thus forming a temporary tower, with a man standing on a small railed platform on the top.—A new diving instrument, the invention of M. Dandurand, has been tried in the Thames near Westminster Bridge, which obviates the inconveniences of the present cumbersome diving-dress. The diver is covered to the waist by an air-tight glazed bell, to which a breathing and a speaking tube are attached. A stream of air driven down the former by a small fan, is constantly passing across the diver's mouth, and escapes up the speaking-tube, and through this latter, messages and instructions may be instantaneously conveyed from above or below. The diver is ballasted by a leaden saddle, on which he sits, and can walk about with great facility.

The Atlantic Telegraph Company announce their hope of laying the submarine cable from Ireland to Newfoundland before the end of 1857, or by the spring of 1858. The whole of the capital, £350,000, is subscribed for. Of the shares which are £1,000 each, 101 are taken in London; 88 in the United States; 86 in Liverpool; 37 in Glasgow; 23 in Manchester; 4 each in Tewkesbury and Brighton; and one each in Nottingham and Leamington. Government undertake to pay £14,000 a year for the use of the line—their messages, and those of the United States government (if required), to have priority over all others. They will, moreover, lend ships to assist in laying down the cable, and in taking such further soundings as may be desirable. The provisional directors, as we hear, have accepted tenders for the making and shipping of the cable by May next. From New York to Newfoundland the telegraph is already complete; and a message has been flashed from one to the other—1700 miles—and an answer returned in fifteen minutes. According to calculation, the Atlantic Telegraph will admit of 30,000 words being flashed in twenty-four hours. It may seem trite to repeat that this is an age of mechanical wonders; but it is impossible to contemplate the union of the Old and the New continents by a line of wire, admitting of hourly intercommunication, without feelings of unusual emotion.

Sir William Snow Harris, whose lightning-conductors protect the British navy, has fitted one of his conductors on board the *Impétueuse* at Cherbourg, with a view to their general introduction into the French navy. He has also read a paper, shewing the nature and importance of the subject, before the Academy at Paris. Let the dangers of navigation by all means be diminished. It appears that marked success has already attended the means employed round our coasts for the saving of life in shipwreck. In 1853, the number of wrecks was 832; of lives lost, 689: in 1854, wrecks, 987; lives lost, 1549: in 1855, wrecks, 1141; lives lost, 469. But for that fatal wreck of the emigrant ship on the Manacles, near the Lizard, the lives lost last year would have numbered but a few beyond three hundred.

A few noticeable geological phenomena have occurred. A party of labourers working in a basin-shaped hollow, at a place called Sabina, about twenty-five miles from Rome, were terrified by a shaking of the ground. They fled. The earth opened, and black smoke poured out; it then sank, and salt-water rose in the hollow, and now forms a lake more than a thousand metres in extent. This may be due to the earthquake in the Levant, which, as appears by the most recent accounts, was unusually destructive.—The *Proceedings of the Royal Dublin Society* contains particulars of the slipping of a bog at Kilmaleady, King's County, in June last. One hundred and fifty acres are buried by the slip, and a gap is left thirty feet deep and a mile and a half in length.—A failure is reported in some of the Cheshire brine-springs which have been flowing for ages, and the upper stratum has fallen in; but it is said in explanation that there is no real failure, there being rock-salt enough to last another thousand years, and that the falling in has occurred only where the rock was dissolved.

We hear from Holland that the value of the land so long covered by the Haarlemmer Meer, is increasing at a rate which insures repayment of all the outlay for the drainage in a comparatively short time. Good crops of colza and rye have been grown, and the potatoes are excellent. Two farms of considerable extent are established; two large villages are being built, and the district is traversed by two good roads. No ill consequences were experienced from intermittent fevers, as was dreaded when the surface was first laid bare, and the numbers of dead fish had no other effect than to fertilise the soil. No objects of natural history or of antiquity were discovered. Holland has now two or three parishes more than she had four years ago. Leyden and Haarlem disputed possession of the newly won territory; but the government has decided that it shall form a district by itself. Amsterdam, relieved from the danger once threatened by the meer, is laying on a supply of drinkable water from the downs or sand-hills along the sea-shore. It is worthy of remark, that the sources in these hills, though copious and of good quality, are most of them below the level of the sea. Having seen with our own eyes the success achieved by the Dutch, we are the more gratified to hear that the work of drainage and reclamation of the proposed new county in the Great Norfolk estuary, is once more resumed. And we may surely hope that with such a success in view, no more will be said about the Essex marshes as being a hinderance to the mighty scheme for discharging the sewage of London into the North Sea.

The Admiralty have granted permission to Lieutenants De Crespigny and Forbes to make surveys and explorations in Borneo.—Major Burton (the pilgrim to Mecca) and Captain Speke are on their way to attempt further discoveries in Eastern Africa; they have with them a small portable iron boat, and hope to navigate Lake Nyassi.—A beginning has been made in the survey of the Euphrates Valley for the proposed railway. The cost is estimated at about £9,000 a mile; and an anticipatory notion of traffic has been formed from the fact, that 1200 laden camels and horses pass a certain bridge over the Orontes every day. The ancient port of Seleucia, at the mouth of the Orontes, is to be the port for the modern railway traffic.—A party of United States savans are about to undertake a scientific exploration of South America. So many years have elapsed since Humboldt's and Bonpland's celebrated visit, that it is believed much good may accrue to science from another well-conducted expedition. The chain of the Andes will be included in the exploration.—Late arrivals from the antipodes bring word that the Pitcairn Islanders, numbering 96 males and 102 females, are now safely settled in their new homes on Norfolk Island. They landed on the 8th of last June, and found, through the kindness of the

government authorities, 2000 sheep, 450 head of cattle, 20 horses, and a year's supply of provisions provided for their use.—A vessel from New Zealand has brought two spars of Kauri pine, each 100 feet long and 34 inches diameter, without a knot. They were landed at Portsmouth, and will, it is supposed, be used for the royal yacht.—The king of Siam has written a letter in English to the President of the Royal Asiatic Society (in London) returning thanks for the honour of having been elected an honorary member of the Society, and promising aid. With the letter he sends two books, which were prepared by one of his nephews, and printed at the royal press, for the instruction of the Siamese in English. His majesty shews an appreciation of our literature and science, rare in an Asiatic; and some of his subjects are so alive to the true principles of commerce, that Siamese vessels are about to sail direct for England, instead of limiting themselves to the trade with Singapore.—A scrap of information, very remarkable if true, has reached us from Adelaide; namely, that the fall of rain is increasing in proportion to the peopling and settlement of the colony.

We have again to report satisfactory progress in economic geology in India. The Asiatic Society of Bengal are receiving from every province specimens of iron and copper ores, of coal, mineral-waters, clays, and fossils. Of the last, an interesting specimen was found near Kooshalgur, by Professor Oldham; and the villagers having been urged to search for others, they all forthwith became collectors, and spent their spare hours in what they called the 'harvest of bones'; and in this way the museum at Calcutta is being enriched with numerous specimens of mammals and reptiles of the tertiary period. Besides these, the Society have received a specimen of a new kind of rock, 'alum porphyry'—that is, porphyry containing *aluminite* from the hills bordering the province of Foh Kien, in China. The deposits of this mineral are said to be really inexhaustible: about 6000 tons of alum are made on the spot every year.

In connection with this alum district, we may notice a phenomenon that occurred in the periodical typhoon of last September. The storm was preceded by a rising of the water in wells and springs for many miles inland. The sea, raised by the fierce wind, was driven over a hundred square miles of the shore-country, with great loss of life and property, and was held from returning by the same violent cause, while a long belt of coast was laid dry between it and the ocean.

To return from this long flight into foreign parts:—An Art Exhibition is open in Edinburgh, interesting alike to artist and artificer. It comprises choice specimens of gold and silver work, carvings, fictile manufactures, printing, weaving, photography, and many more.—Crossing the Border, we mention the improvements made at Alnwick Castle by the Duke of Northumberland—re-edification, medieval ornament, and decorations in the Italian style of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Stone for the steps was obtained in large blocks from a quarry on Rothbury Moor, and this it is which prompts us to advert to the subject; for in a paper on the improvements, read before the Institute of British Architects, it is stated that 'stones of 30 feet square, and 50 or 60 feet long, may be obtained if required: the texture is very hard, and of a beautiful white, free from marks or flaws.'—The Photographic Society open the new year with a new exhibition of light pictures produced by their own skill and perseverance. Pure photography only—and very properly—is to be admitted: all specimens touched up or doctored will be rejected. A Photographic Society has been embodied within the past few weeks at Birmingham; and photographic classes are established in the arsenal at Woolwich, for the instruction of the military and naval employés in the art, so that they may be able to

take impressions of field-works, weapons, gun-carriages, burst guns, and indeed of anything likely to be useful in either service.

ANCESTORS OF THE JEAMESSES.

THE dignified persons who in the present day wait upon us at meals are, no doubt, a little different from the valets of chivalry, who, after doing their spiring at the table, cleared all away, and took up their master's daughter, or one of her noble companions, to dance. But it is not fair to Jeames to regard him as in the position of archangel ruined; on the contrary, he has risen to his present eminence from a very humble, and indeed abject condition. The valets alluded to, although people have been misled by the name, were no predecessors of his: they were aspirants of knighthood, who pushed the professionals from their stools, and performed in their stead the duties of hospitality; and so honourable were such duties deemed, that, as we read in Villehardouin, the son of the Emperor of the East was styled the Valet of Constantinople.

Jeames's ancestors of the fourteenth century, then called Chamberlains, were in a very different position, as we find by a singular and rare old black-letter treatise, of the date 1506–1508 (Wynkin de Worde), a copy of which is to be found among Bishop More's curious books, in the public library at Cambridge, and which treats of household matters in that age. It includes certain directions to the principal servants in their several duties. Those to the 'chamberlain' are especially quaint, and worthy of quotation. It will be noted, among other things, that this gentleman's master is spoken of as his 'soverayne'; and this appears to have been the customary title, for although the individual actually referred to was probably a powerful noble—in that day and more than a century later styled a prince—the tract tells us in its title-page that the instructions it contains were intended for the service of a prince or *anie other estate*. Jeames, therefore, has not only risen, but his master has fallen; and great is the fall from a sovereign to a mere g'nor. Let us proceed, however, to the daily duties of a gentleman's gentleman of the fourteenth century.

The chamberlain must be diligent and cleanlie in his office, *with his heade kembed* [combed], and see that ye have a cleane shyrte, breech, petticoate, and doublet. Brushe first your soveraynes hosen within and without, and see his shone [shoes] be cleane. And at morne, when your soveraine will arise, warme his shyrte by the fyre, and see ye have a foote sheete made in this manner. First set a chaire by the fyre with a quishin [cushion], another onder his feete, then spredde a sheete over the chaire, and see there be readie a goodlie kerchiefe and a combe, then warme his petticoate, his doublet, and his stomacher, and then put on his doublet and his stomacher, and then put on his hosen and his shone or slippes [slippers]—then stricke me up his hosen mannerlie, and tie them up—then lace his doublet, hole by hole, and lay a clothe about his necke and heade, than looke ye have a baysin and an ewer for warme watere, and also a towell to wash his hands—then kneele upon your knees and aske of your soverayne what robe he will weare, and bringe him such as your soveraine commandeth, and likewise put the same oppon hym, and take your leave mannerlie, and go to the church or chapel, to your soveraine's closet [pew or oratory], and dighte [arrange] carpets and quishins, and also lay me down hys littel boke of praiers. Then drawe the curtins, and take your leave godlie and goodlie, and next goe to your soveraine's chamber, and cast me all the clothes from the bed—then beate me well your soverigne his bolstere and fether-bed, but looke well ye waste no fetheres. * * * Then lay carpets about the bed, and

quiehins in the cupboards, and in the windowes, also looke there be a goode fyre burning. * * *

And then, when your soveraine take of [off] hyse gowne, and brynge hym a mantel, for to kepe hym from colde, then brynge hym to the fyre, and take of [off] his shone and hys hosen—then take a fayre kerchiefe of reins [Rheims] and kembe [comb] his heade and put me on hys kerchife, and his bonet—then spredde downe his bed—lay the heade shetes and ye pillowes. And when ye soverayne is to bed, drawe ye curtins, then see there be 'morter' or wax, or 'perchours' ready—then drive out dog or cat, and looke there be baysins & vessels, set nere unto your soverayne—then take your leave mannerlie, that your soveraine take his rest merrilie.

The 'morter' or the 'perchours' were probably some species of lights, as they are enumerated in connection with wax.

It is somewhat surprising to find the servant of a man of rank recommended to attend his master with his head combed; but it is actually astounding to find the peer or bold baron of that iron period, whom we usually picture to ourselves in armoured panoply, as attired in 'petticoate, stomacher, gowne, bonet, and mantel,' articles of dress now so essentially confined to the fair sex. A servant, too, in the present time of the Jeameses' elevation, would cause some little sensation in a gentleman's house by flinging himself on his knees every morning to demand: 'What coat will your lordship please to wear to-day?'

As for the hiatus marked by asterisks, that is merely the omission of some uninteresting detail; for, in point of fact, it would seem from the instructions that Jeames's sovereign was withdrawn from circulation during the whole space between morning-prayers and bedtime. This, however, only marks the then customary division of labour. The groom, huntsman, and other officials, would doubtless come upon duty in the forenoon; then the chivalrous valets at dinner-time; and, finally, the wearied sovereign would be delivered over again into the hands of Jeames, to be combed, night-capped, and put to bed.

NOTE.

In answer to several correspondents, making reference to an article in No. 141, entitled the *Life-assurance Companies of the Last Twelve Years*, we have to explain, on the part of the writer, that he meant to express only a general preference of old, as contrasted with new offices, on the ground that many of the latter were evidently so overborne by the disproportion of expenses to the amount of business, that their future stability was questionable. He does not presume to doubt that some of the more recent offices are of a stable character, though this may not be at once determinable. Of one office—the *Colonial*—which was founded within the last twelve years, and to which some of our correspondents make reference, he has to remark that it is, alike by the special object of its establishment, its being a Scotch concern, and its great, and, to all appearance, sound business, wholly beyond the scope of his remarks.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

THE Christmas-tide—the Christmas-tide,
The merry, merry Christmas-tide!
What joyful meetings round the blaze,
Dear customs of the good old days:
The mistletoe hung overhead,
The walls with holly garlanded;
The laugh goes round, the tale is told,
Strange, legendary tales of old;
And shyly in the fire-light stand
Strong youth, sweet girlhood, hand in hand,
The wooer and his promised bride—
Oh, sweet and happy Christmas-tide!

The Christmas-tide—the Christmas-tide,
The mournful, mournful Christmas-tide
Calls up from Memory's hallowed store
Loved faces seen with us no more.
Weep, bridegroom, for thy buried bride,
Who sat with thee last Christmas-tide—
Now lying cold, mute, and alone,
Whose life and love were all thine own:
What tearful groups of household faces
Gaze sadly on deserted places
Of those afar, of those who died—
Oh, mournful, mournful Christmas-tide!

The Christmas-tide—the Christmas-tide,
The holy, holy Christmas-tide!
Though stars alone give forth their light,
Where angel-wings once clove the night;
'Peace and good-will—peace and good-will'
The golden message echoes still;
Oh, kneel and pray—oh, kneel and pray;
Mourner, rejoice upon thy way—
Be grief and joy both sanctified,
This blest and holy Christmas-tide!

M. E. S.

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